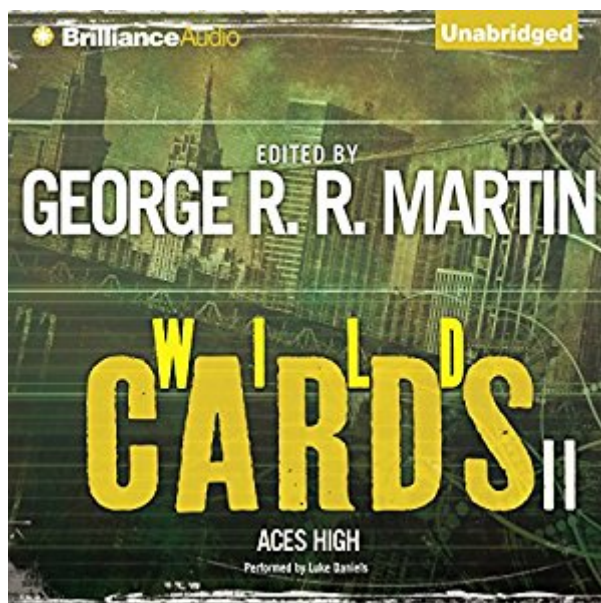


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# Wild Cards II: Aces High



## Synopsis

After the alien virus struck humanity in the wake of World War II, a handful of the survivors found they possessed superhuman powers. The Wild Cards shared-world volumes tell their story. Here in book two, we trace these heroes and villains through the tumultuous 1980s, in stories from SF and fantasy giants such as George R. R. Martin, Roger Zelazny, Pat Cadigan, Lewis Shiner, Walter Jon Williams, and others.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Note that there are 10 reviews for the prior printing of this book if you want to look at them. The main difference between this book and book 1 is that there is a unifying plot here -- bad monster from space, and evil cult type helpers on earth. If measured against the standards for a good plot in traditional books, it, lets be honest, falls pretty short. That said, the point of the series is the creativity and fun of the individual stories of the aces and jokers, and on that level this book succeeds even better than book 1. You get more Croyd (always fun), more Turtle, more Mark Meadows, who may or may not be the ace known as Radical, but displays new and fun "abilities" here, more Tachyon, the introduction of Jube as a main -- and very entertaining -- character, and the introduction to Modular Man, another great ace. Fortunato, who I don't really care for, is also here big time, as is the non-ace archer out for vengeance. I wish the plot was better, and the villains had more meat to them. But everything that made first book entertaining is here, plus a unifying plot which, while not great, definitely adds a little something over book 1. If you liked book 1, no reason to

hesitate.

It's a much faster paced and shorter (by 100 pages) book than the first one. They did a good job merging the new characters and the old as well. The only issue is the last 1/5 of the book is a total drag. It's painfully boring and kills the good pace the book had through out the previous 4/5 of it. I feel that section should have been a lot shorter, Especially the final chapter. And the big climax of the book fell flat.

This book is amazing! Nay, this whole series is phenomenal!! I recommend it highly to everyone I know. The whole universe that the authors have combined to create is simple perfect. The depth of the characters is probably my favorite aspect. Even with all their amazing abilities or their grotesque flaws they come off as super relatable and very human. I absolutely love these books, I constantly find my self babbling on and on about the books to anyone who will listen. You need to get these books. I just hope that will release a kindle version for the middle chunk of the series. Right now they offer 1 through 4 and then like the last third of the ongoing series. Please put those out there and I will gladly buy them all! I don't want to have to wait for them to come in the mail! Though I will eventually get the paperbacks for my shelf... they are so good!

For those who haven't read the first book in this series, Wild Cards I, it is a large composition of cooperative storytelling that involves the events and consequences surrounding an outbreak of superpowers. It is at turns complex, meaningful, intriguing and suspenseful - and as a concession to its medium of inspiration - a little bit cheesy. Great fun. This book is a change of pace, and it set a pattern that many of the contributing authors would use for the series. (Kindle availability is spotty, so this may yet not be a big deal to you.) Instead of more than a dozen stories with their own beginnings and ends, Wild Cards II engages in fewer stories, all of which follow the same global event. The reading is just as enjoyable, but markedly different. Here's where I'll start dodging spoilers. The event itself involves a threat from deep space that has some reminiscent ties to Lovecraftian horror. I feel it ties in to four-color comic book horror, which is to say there needn't be advanced motivations or sympathetic villains. The bad guys in this book are definitely bad guys. The good guys are incidental, though, and they maintain their heart-wrenching weaknesses from the first book. Turtle, Fortunato, Peregrine, Chrysalis, and Jube have all emerged from Wild Cards 1 with more than a couple scars and here we see the cracks showing. Dr. Tachyon is back as well, but as opposed to his arc in Wild Cards 1, he's better composed and wanting to fight the good fight. Wild

Cards has some popular legacy of being "realistic" but that term always bothers me in comics, sci-fi and fantasy. Realism isn't what we're here for, and it's highly subjective, so I'll try and put it another way: Wild Cards is about complex, vice-stricken characters whose weaknesses are sometimes physical and always emotional. They're strange, damaged goods, all wanting to fit into a world that doesn't want to accommodate them. You won't see spandex-clad poster children with paragon virtues. You'll see addicts, emotional burn-outs, grief-stricken has-beens, misguided egotists, and preening divas. If you like the iconoclastic rejection of Four-Color Simple Times, you'll like this. If you're up for more of a campy, easy-going and broad story, you should consider other things.

I know George RR Martin plays an editing role in this and it's not solely his baby, but it's how I was introduced to it - I loved the television show Game of Thrones, then the book series on which it's based, then I read everything of his I could (including a collection of his short stories). Some of them were from Wild Cards. So I read book one, this and I'm about to start three. Absolutely perfect. Set aside all preconceived notions and just read.

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